

It's my list to port

I do like a list. Shopping list, jobs list, wish list, etc. I love to set things down in a clear, easily understood format and then obliterate them when they are done, achieved or acquired. Lists are a visible measure of organisation and whilst they may be daunting at times they should always result in satisfaction eventually once they are complete, or even diminished. There is one list however that isn't giving me any pleasure at all. In fact, it's giving me nothing but angst. I lie

awake at night pondering it and trying to work out the answer to it. I have spent several months now working out how to address it and although it isn't as daunting as it once was it still causes me consternation.

It's my list to port.

We didn't notice it when we bought the Golden Girl. In all the excitement of finally finding our 'perfect' boat we never noticed that she was a little wayward. If we had noticed we might have been able to negotiate a reduction in the price. The money saved could

even have been converted to one pound coins and stashed as ballast on the starboard side to solve the problem. Now that would have been a neat solution don't you think? It was only after we had been living on the boat for a while that we became aware that we were never quite upright. I started to investigate, and I started with a list.

Heavy items on a narrow boat

Fresh water tank

Fuel tank

Calorifier (think of it as a fancy immersion heater) (or if you are under fifty, a giant kettle)

Solid fuel stove

Batteries

Engine

Washing machine

Freezer/Fridge

These items need to be carefully distributed on either side of the boat in order to maintain a nice even balance but in our case they

are not. The heaviest items are all on the port side and to make matters worse we gave away the really heavy sofa that used to sit on the starboard side with us on top of it. Now we sit on two lightweight IKEA chairs leaning gently towards the fire and the telly.

It's not all bad news; if you drop anything round or cylindrical then you immediately know which side of the boat it is to be found on and spillages on the sink side of the galley all run to the back of the worktops rather than on to the

floor. We also corner marginally better on left hand bends.

As I have explored the dark recesses of the boat I have discovered that the previous owners had made various attempts to redress the balance as you might say. There are bags of garden stone in the engine bay on the opposite side of the battery bank. Handy if we ever moor long enough to establish a patio garden or put in an entry to the Chelsea Flower Show I suppose. We have continued this theme, storing a 40 foot length of redundant anchor

chain under our bed on the starboard side but nothing quite seems to solve the problem.

I did come up with the brilliant idea of buying lots of beer and wine and storing it all on the lighter side of the boat. It definitely helped but it turns out not to be a permanent solution. I obviously didn't think that one through properly.

If anybody can come up with a list of ways we can solve the problem I would be truly grateful.



Does that look straight to you?